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Books of Special Interest

Empress Dowager

MOTHER DEAR; THE EMPRESS MARIE OF RUSSIA AND HER TIMES. By V. POLIAKOFF (Augur). New York: D. Appleton & Company. \$3.50.

Reviewed by A. M. NIKOLAIIEFF

BIOGRAPHIES of persons who are still living do not fall as a rule into the scope of literary works which may be considered as reflecting the full and true characteristics of their subjects. The author of such a biography, even should he succeed in freeing himself from the bias existing in every contemporary observer, is strongly handicapped by the lack of historical perspective. There are, however, exceptions to that general rule. The period of the Imperial régime in Russia, brought to an end by the Revolution, may be regarded as one of them. Though fresh in the memory of the older generation, it has, since the great cataclysm and fundamental change in Russia's life, become history, and the personages who had taken active part in that period belong to the past.

This is one reason why the appearance of a book devoted to Marie Feodorovna, Empress Dowager of Russia, does not seem premature. Another reason lies in the fact that all who, whether "at the Court or outside of it," knew Dagmar, the little Danish Princess, who came to be a mighty Empress and whose life "spans three political generations," were unanimous in their opinion as to her characteristics and the rôle she had played in Russia. This great popularity she won by the charm of her personality, her unflinching tact, womanly virtues, and enlightened activities.

The contrasts and ups and downs of Empress Marie's highly dramatic fate present perhaps a unique example. Her childhood and early life, though she was one of the children of Prince Christian and Princess Louise (who later became King and Queen of Denmark), passed under very modest conditions. Her parents were obliged "to scrape to make their budget balance somehow," and the children's great pleasure was to stroll along the streets of Copenhagen and "have a good look in at the windows of the smart shops which were too expensive for them." That simple atmosphere changed for her into a life of splendor and glory, when at the age of nineteen, a graceful girl with "starry eyes," she married the Heir Apparent of Russia and later (in 1881) became the Empress-consort of Alexander III. An excellent idea of the pomp, glitter, and magnificence which surrounded her may be had from such descriptions in the book as the ceremony of her wedding day in St. Petersburg and of the Coronation in the Kremlin. But the glory of that life was obscured by an ever-existent shadow of tragedy. The "dreadful man-hunt" by the Nihilists against Alexander II which resulted in his assassination, the attempts on the life of her husband, Alexander III (in one of which Lenin's brother took part), the railway catastrophe at Borki in which the Imperial family was saved from inevitable death by the gigantic strength of the Emperor who for a few moments supported the weight of the falling roof of the car on his broad back, the revolutionary movement of 1905, and the fall of the Imperial régime,—followed by Bolshevism—such were the circumstances under which passed more than fifty years of her life in Russia.

Exposed, as she was, owing to her high rank, to the danger of political assassination, Empress Marie did not take personal part in politics. Her interest was concentrated on family affairs and on social work which she took upon herself at the head of great educational and charitable organizations in Russia. Yet there are proofs showing how great and beneficial was the influence exercised by her over her husband. No less important was her rôle in the reign of her son, Nicholas II, during which her position as the first lady at Court remained unimpaired and her influence in court etiquette as well as her social leadership were predominant. She was regarded as the "repository of a tradition," but never did she pursue personal aggrandizement. Later, when a "moral cleavage" occurred between her and her son she preferred "voluntary retirement" to an open break. In this "retirement" she lived all through the Great War, but continued, to the fullest extent, her activities in relieving distress and supporting the Red Cross and other organizations. When, following the Revolution, matters in Russia were going from bad to

worse, and at her place in the Crimea she was kept for a time under severe guard by Bolshevik sailors who committed countless atrocities—the situation was taken by her "with more than good humor" and she carried herself with true Imperial dignity. In 1919, when Civil war was raging in Russia, a Dreadnought specially sent by King George took away the Dowager Empress—his aunt. From England she came back to Copenhagen. "The course of life has been run and the circle is closed."

It is not only Empress Marie's portrait and life-story, in the narrow sense of these words, that form the contents of the book. We also find in it an interesting description of her times, excellent pen sketches of the last autocrats of Russia, and enlightening glimpses into history. The conflict between the two Empresses—mother and wife of Nicholas II, is also taken up. Occasionally the reader comes across details which are not generally known, and tend to show that the author must have had access to private documents. This greatly helped him to perform successfully his task—to place before the present generation a vivid picture of a great lady who may serve as a high example of those who symbolize noble and "sweet womanhood."

The English Language

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WRITINGS ON THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE FROM THE BEGINNING OF PRINTING TO THE END OF 1922. By ARTHUR G. KENNEDY. Cambridge and New Haven: Harvard University Press. Yale University Press. 1927.

Reviewed by GEORGE PHILIP KRAPP
Columbia University

IN the long future, many a student of English will have occasion to think gratefully of Professor Kennedy as he draws upon the rich collections of this book. Fourteen years of labor have gone to the making of the book and just short of fourteen thousand separate title entries are made and discussed in it. Some of these entries are cross-references under different headings, but not many. On the other hand, the fourteen thousand entries by no means indicate the number of works examined and citations made. For a single entry may carry under the main title ten or a dozen references to reviews in scattered places. Professor Kennedy explains that he has checked more than fifteen thousand volumes of serial publications for articles on English—a task in itself to make one groan. But it is just this kind of exhaustiveness that makes the book specially valuable to the student of the English language.

Most persons who are at all deeply interested in English no doubt have kept some sort of bibliography, but the number of those who have had the courage and patience to put down all the titles they thought they might at some time need must be very small. But here they are, all logically arranged according to a simple system of classification, and all fully indexed for the convenience of those who do not want to take the trouble to understand the classification. That the bibliography is absolutely complete the compiler does not maintain, nor will any reasonable person expect that it should be so. Certain large general exclusions were intentionally made in the first plan of the book, for example, of writings on English versification, of rhetorics, elementary grammars, dictionaries, and other text books for the lower grades of schools made after 1800. The inclusion of all this material would have increased the size of the book greatly but would have added little to its usefulness. Perhaps something more could be said for the inclusion of editions of texts primarily of linguistic interest. Very often editions of Old and Middle English texts contain in their introductions materials of more importance to the student of language than separate writings on the texts. Yet again a complete bibliography of the editions of Beowulf or of Chaucer would obviously fall out of the plan of Professor Kennedy's book.

Within the limits he has set for himself, Professor Kennedy's bibliography seems to be remarkably complete. Absolute exhaustiveness in a book of this kind is not attained in a first effort, but here is certainly a solid foundation on which later compilers may build with the comforting assurance that the heaviest part of their work has been done for them. Perhaps Professor Kennedy himself may be persuaded to proceed with a supplement to his bibliography, bringing it down through the five years that have passed since it was necessary for him to close his books.

Wooden Ships

FORESTS AND SEA POWER. By ROBERT G. ALBION. \$5.

Reviewed by THEODORE S. WOOLSEY, JR.

THIS is a study of "The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy 1652-1862" based on an exceedingly complete Bibliography as well as on manuscript sources in the United States, England, and France. In the Introduction it is stated: "Oak, like oil today, was a natural product very abundant at the outset, but liable to ultimate exhaustion," but the author might have emphasized the difference between oak, a crop to be grown in a century or more, and oil, a mineral to be mined and then never replaced.

The initial chapter on "Trees and Ship Timber" explains the construction of the wooden gun ships and the kinds and sizes of wood needed for the hull and masts. One is amazed by the corruption and bribery that existed in the civil branch of the English navy and when Lord St. Vincent tried to break the timber monopoly he had to yield because needed oak and masts were cut off and Napoleon threatened. With England's diminishing woodlands, with the Baltic supply cut off by Napoleon, and with the American Revolution on its hands no wonder England was "searching the world for timber." Notwithstanding such pressure for timber English conservatism prevented the use of sawmills until the end of the eighteenth century—long after the first American mill was established near York, Maine, in 1623. Even in 1860 "half the timber was converted by hand" in the British Isles.

Professor Albion has furnished such a multitude of detail that publication prior to 1917 might have saved the United States the stigma of its own wooden ship adventure. This accurate history of building wooden ships for England's navy might have warned our Shipping Board of wooden ship shortcomings, such as brief life, high cost of repairs, and difficult timber supply problems. To build and keep in repair her wooden navy at times seemed an impossible task for England. The greater the need for staunch ships the more difficult became the timber supply especially when it had to be conveyed from overseas. The more fighting, the greater the need for pine masts, for oak hull timber, and the more difficult its purchase and transport. "Great" and curved "compass" timber which had to come from isolated trees was often impossible to secure. This curved stock was vital to the frame. The stern post of a seventy-four gun ship required a single oak stick about 40 feet long and 28 inches thick. A foremast 36 inches in diameter and 108 feet long cost even in 1770 £100 and usually had to come from North America. This illustrates some of the difficulties in detail. Moreover the reservation of this large mast timber in New England forests undoubtedly irritated the Colonists and helped to start the Revolution. Such a royal preemption of naval timber was never a legal measure in England although a practice in France under Colbert.

The whole history of two centuries of ship building for the Royal Navy (1652-1862) was a succession of successful "muddling through." After the local supply of English oak ran short because of overcutting the sporadic attempts at reforestation began in 1580, failed to relieve the shortage. From 1608 to 1783 the available oak within the royal forests had decreased to about one-fifth the original amount while the demand had increased. No wonder England bought largely from the Baltic, Australia, and elsewhere. In 1840 sixteen-twenty-fifths of the oak was cut in England while in 1860 barely one-seventh; coupled with the actual shortage of timber was the widespread corruption, poor credit, monopoly, and selfishness of officials and contractors. Then too the use of unseasoned wood increased dry rot to such an extent that ships often had to be repaired before they were commissioned, incredible as it may sound. At the time of Trafalgar dry rot almost lost the battle.

It is interesting to surmise what would have happened to British naval power if the ironclad Merrimac had not blown up and rammed the Congress and Cumberland early in 1862. The end of the wooden warship came suddenly and by 1866 iron was used for the capitol ships.

The British sea victories seem to have been due to the men who commanded and sailed and fought the ships rather than to the quality of the ships themselves. Perhaps the stupidity of other nations helped but certainly England's naval success was not due to far sighted forest conservation.

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Our Brother is dead, He rests from he labor An' he sleeps,— (<i>Shrill voice of Sister</i>)	He sleeps, Oh, he sleeps!
Wey de tall pines grow, (<i>Another voice</i>)	On the banks of a river.
On the banks of a river. (<i>Several voices</i>)	On the banks of a river.
He trouble is done, He's left dis world On the wings of glory. (<i>Voice</i>)	On the wings of glory!
Out of life's storm, (<i>Another voice</i>)	On the wings of glory!
Out of life's darkness, (<i>Several voices</i>)	On the wings of glory!
He sails in the light, Of the Lamb. Away from his troubles, Away from the night (<i>Congregation</i>)	In the light! In the light! Of the lamb.
He's gone to the kingdom above, In the raiment of angels, (<i>Voice of Sister</i>)	In the raiment! In the raiment of Angels!
To the region above, An' he sleeps,— (<i>Voices chanting throughout congregation</i>)	Oh, he sleeps— Oh, he sleeps! On the banks of a river.
Way de tall pines grow, On the banks of a river. (<i>Congregation</i>)	With the starry crowned angels, On the banks of a river.
An' the flowers is bloomin' In the blood of the Lamb. (<i>Shrill voice of Sister and taken up by congregation chanting and swaying</i>)	The blood of the Lamb! In the blood of the Lamb!
An' the birds is singin' Wey de wind blows soft, As the breath of an angel, An' he sleeps! Wey de tall pines grow, On the banks of a river (<i>Voice</i>)	An' he sleeps! Wey de tall pines grow.
An' his sperrit is guarded, (<i>Several voices</i>)	On the banks of a river.
By a flaming-faced angel. (<i>Sister</i>)	Yes, Jesus, of a flaming-faced angel On the banks of a river.
Standing on mountains of rest. An' he sleeps way de tall pines grow, On the banks of a river. (<i>Congregation</i>)	Oh, he sleeps! He sleeps!

What They Say About CONGAREE SKETCHES

CONGAREE SKETCHES is the work of an artist. These brief vignettes are very nearly perfect. In them the Negro idiom is set down with startling felicity, and in them it has real charm and vigor. —*Baltimore Evening Sun*.

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These sketches stand in direct line of the tales that made Joel Chandler Harris famous and like them should find readers not only among students of folklore but also among that part of the public, young and old, which rejoices in the fertility and ingenuity of the untutored Negro mind. —*Saturday Review of Literature*.

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Dr. E. C. L. Adams has done for the vanishing folk legends of the Southern Negro what Bishop Percy in the eighteenth century did for the British ballad. —*The Forum*.

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Books of Special Interest

Lives of Musicians

ARTHUR SEYMOUR SULLIVAN. By H. SAXE WYNNDHAM. New York: Harper & Bros. 1927.

GEORGES BIZET. By D. C. PARKER. The same.

JOHANNES BRAHMS. By JEFFREY PULVER. The same.

Reviewed by KATHERINE RUTH HEYMAN

BOOKS of this nature usually serve one of two purposes; either they stimulate research or by attention to detail render further research unnecessary. A third purpose is served by the most recent output in the Modern Masters Series. Charm for the lay-reader is its dominant characteristic, especially in the case of Bizet.

The lives of the three composers represented lend themselves to attractive writing. Now that a movement is on foot in England toward making the Gilbert and Sullivan operas a national institution, interest is reawakened in the masterpieces of light opera produced by those two artists while holding before their faces the mask of comedy.

To separate the names of Gilbert and Sullivan is as hard as to effect a divorce between Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Shean. Yet W. S. Gilbert would never have found the facile music quill for his poetical conceits, had not Sir Arthur Sullivan been the zealous student in Leipzig whose earnestness was an example to his fellows, among them Edward Grieg.

*It is a very serious thing
To be a funny man.*

To one who, like the reviewer, can recall the monologue of Sir Arthur Sullivan by quick mirth dislodged as fast as ever it was replaced, the story of his life by H. S. Wyndham is a welcome addition to the meagre accounts previously published. The "one conspicuous failure, Ruddigore,"—to quote W. S. Gilbert,—put seven thousand pounds in his pocket as librettist. This in view of the fact that he and Sullivan found the burlesque stage "in a very unclean state" and resolved to "wipe out the grosser element," may be a timely suggestion.

If a criticism may be levelled at this volume, it is for the inclusion of too generous a number of Sir Arthur's friends of unequal importance and interest.

The study of Brahms by Jeffrey Pulver is not open to the same criticism, for although like Sullivan, Brahms "enjoyed a social success that was very valuable to him" at the beginning of his career, the names of Liszt, Schumann, Hanslick, and von Bülow are oftener to be found in these pages than local lights or hospitable friends. It appears in this volume that the famous phrase of the "three B's" was a *mot* of von Bülow, and the author of the book suggests the justification of the linking of the names of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms by reason of the homage rendered to Beethoven in the last movement of the First Symphony and to Bach in the Finale of the Fourth. These two symphonies appealed most directly to the exigent Leipzig public and press of the late nineteenth century.

The genius for friendship which was a noble part of the endowment of Johannes Brahms, is well depicted in this volume. As the gossip is of the great, it is highly interesting.

A complete list of works from opus 1 to opus 122, dating from 1853 to 1902 appears as an appendix, with a parallel list of contemporary works of importance including the names of Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner, Verdi, and Strauss. Works by Brahms published without opus numbers from 1858 to 1902 are separately listed—a valuable contribution for the student.

The book on Bizet in the Modern Masters Series is by D. C. Parker and pleases with its sympathetic understanding of the composer's mind. It deals subjectively with Bizet, from the time of his effort to carry off the Prix de Rome, through his crossing the threshold from schoolroom to theatre, through the ghastly night when after Carmen's first performance its composer "wandered about Paris distracted, on the arm of Ernest Guiraud, a terrified witness of his despair and his tears."

The historic première of Carmen is impartially discussed, the various chroniclers quoted, and the net result is the report of the most reserved of them all: "The public showed its customary disdain toward him (Bizet)." "Carmen" being counted historically the first success after many failures, it is small wonder that the sufferings of Bizet on this occasion vanquished his energy and courage, and at the end of three months, killed him.

Calve is, quite fittingly, brought into the story of Carmen, inasmuch as her originality gave the opera some of its most characteristic high-lights in popular esteem.

To apply the words of the author of "Georges Bizet" to his own pages: "I venture to think that they bring us into close contact with the man himself." The phrase is used by Mr. Parker with reference to the letters of Bizet which are recommended as direct and not written with an eye to the gallery or to posterity. Quotations from these letters abound. A comparative chronological list of compositions adds to the value of the book.

Racial Problems

THE RACIAL BASIS OF CIVILIZATION: A Critique of the Nordic Doctrine. By FRANK H. HANKINS. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1927. \$2.75.

Reviewed by C. K. OGDEN

THE time was ripe for an authoritative survey of the Nordic controversy, and the Professor of Sociology at Smith College has provided one. Moved to wrath by the writings of Burgess, Madison Grant, McDougall, and Stoddard, he has crossed swords with them in a critical examination of evidence and assumptions. Returning from the funeral he proceeds to discuss the nature of race as such, the idea of pure races, the relations of race and nationality, race equality, race mixture,—and the future.

By judicious steps we are led to the very natural conclusion that race crossing as such is not biologically injurious. Rather does it widen variability and at least temporarily enhance racial vigor. All the important races are of hybrid origin. Many of the men of genius of western Europe were demonstrably hybrids. The Old Americans were hybrids at the start, and the later immigrants who are gradually absorbing them have brought with them musical, artistic, and literary capacities of which the Old American stock was relatively poor. Mulattoes are superior to negroes in intelligence, and many of them are superior in their biological inheritance to millions of white citizens. And so forth, until it becomes clear even to the least prophetic that the next apostles of Nordicism will in future find their work cut out for them in more senses than one.

Professor Hankins is able to award the Nordics, if any, quite a handsome palm for their share in building up the civilization which had its outcome in the Great War. But he would oil that palm to secure at least a backstairs entry to other racial ideals. In other words he would water its capital by selling other stocks to the eugenic purists.

The book is admirably documented from every angle, though it is odd that Professor Hankins cites nothing more fundamental than Bean and Todd on the cranial capacity of negroes. For a second edition, it is worth mentioning that Mr. V. Gordon Childe, author of that masterly work, "The Dawn of European Civilization," is not a Professor, but, like so many eminent English scholars, entirely unsupported by any university. It is important not to give the universities credit for more than they actually do, especially in a sociological work, owing to the illusion of the great American Foundations that by endowing Universities they are covering more than a fraction of the research which is crying for assistance. In this connection no mention is made of Dr. F. G. Crookshank's "The Mongol in Our Midst," by far the most significant document in favor of the view that both Mongoloid and Negroid traits are discoverable in so-called Aryan communities.

Racial problems and prejudices are likely to play so important a part in the future of America during the next decade that a new Department might well be created to cope with the situation. And for such a Department Professor Hankins would make an ideal Chief. He is high-souled, broad-minded, and clear-headed; moreover, he has a sense of humor and a vigorous pen. Few European Ministers have possessed such qualifications; whence the social troubles of the Old World. There are barriers which can be removed only by science, education, and diplomacy.